

# 100 years

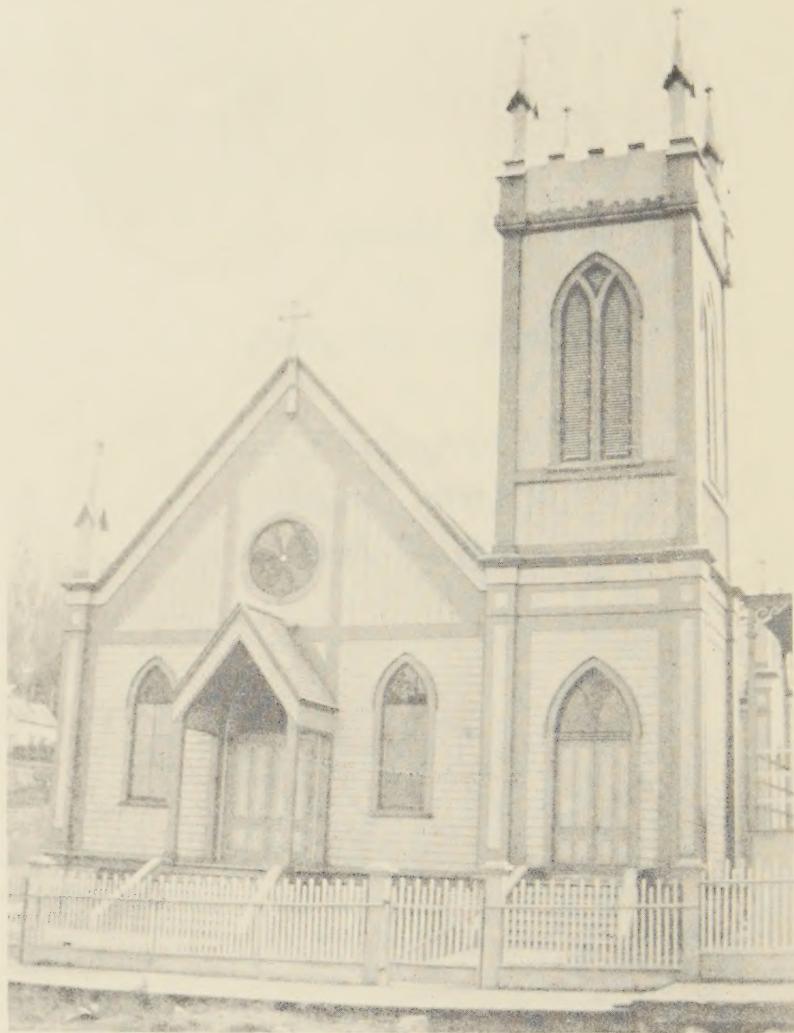


Grace Church  
1864-1964



*A history  
of  
the first 100 years  
of  
Grace Episcopal Church  
Astoria, Oregon  
1864 — 1964*

*Grace Church — 100 years*



Grace Church shortly after construction in 1886

## *Grace Church — 100 years*



REV. THOMAS A. HYLAND  
1864 — 1878



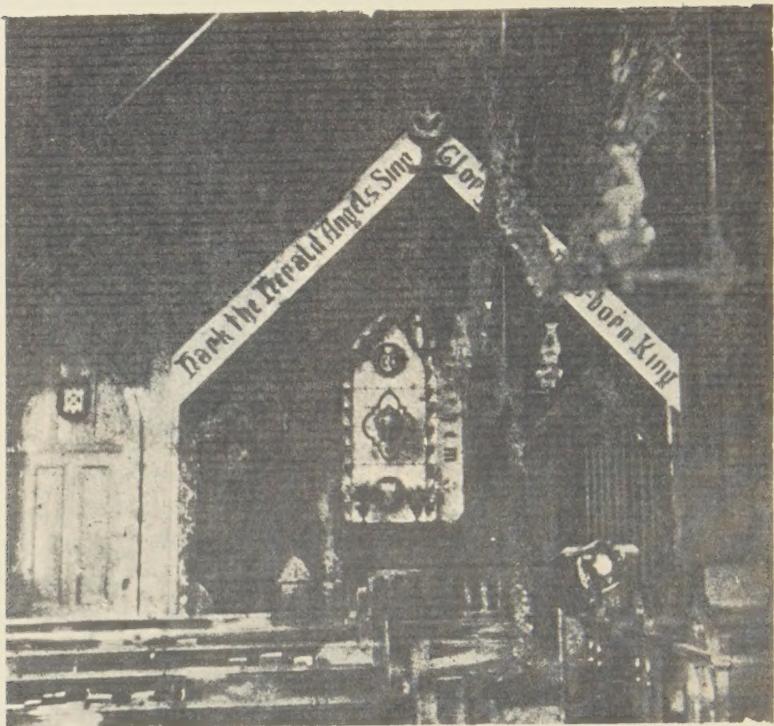
REV. OCTAVIOUS PARKER  
1878 — 1879

While this history concerns itself with "Grace Episcopal Church of the City of Astoria" (our official name), it should be well to mention that preceding the founding of Grace Church 100 years ago, Astoria had several visits from Episcopal Clergymen.

The first was made by the Rev. Herbert Beaver of the Church of England who was Chaplain at the Hudson Bay Company's Post at Vancouver, Washington. The date of his visit is not definite, but probably in 1838. At that time he baptized four children and married James Bierney and Charlotte Beaulieu. (The Bierneys settled in the vicinity of Cathlamet, Washington, and in fact, certain geographical areas in that vicinity still bear the Bierney name.) The next visit of record by an Episcopal Clergyman was made in November 1853 by the Rev. John McCarty. He held one or more services which were well attended, but writes "that he could find no Episcopalians." Nevertheless, he urged that the importance of Astoria was such that a church should be established. In 1854 through 1856 Bishop Thomas Fielding Scott, the first Bishop of Oregon, held services in Astoria — and reported to the Board of Missions — that he hoped to build a church at Astoria, and had the co-operation of the people but lack of a Clergyman prevented. In 1863 Bishop Scott spent two Sundays in Astoria at which time he confirmed Miss Mary Adair and Miss Emma Brown — probably our first candidates for confirmation.

In 1864 the efforts of Bishop Scott were realized when he prevailed upon the Rev. Thomas A. Hyland to accept an assignment to Astoria and become the Rector of the new Episcopal Church in Astoria. By

## *Grace Church — 100 years*



Interior view of the original Grace Church located on Commercial Street

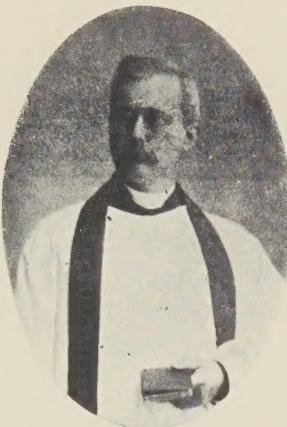
action of the first Vestry and doubtless with help from Mr. Hyland, the name GRACE CHURCH was selected as the name for the new church. It was a wonderful thing for our Grace Church that such dedicated people as Rev. and Mrs. Hyland were to spearhead the church's efforts in Astoria. For three years Grace Church held their services in the County Court House, then a two story rather small frame building located on the corner of what is now 8th and Commercial Streets with the entrance on 8th Street, the site being the northeast corner of the present Court House block, directly catercornered from the Spexarth Building.

Then in 1867 came the climax to three years of efforts on the part of Mr. Hyland and our pioneer members and their friends. Our own church building was built and consecrated by Bishop Scott, and it is interesting to learn that the church consecration service in Astoria was the last official act that Bishop Scott ever performed in this Diocese.

## *Grace Church — 100 years*



REV. ALFRED T. PERKINS  
1879 — 1881

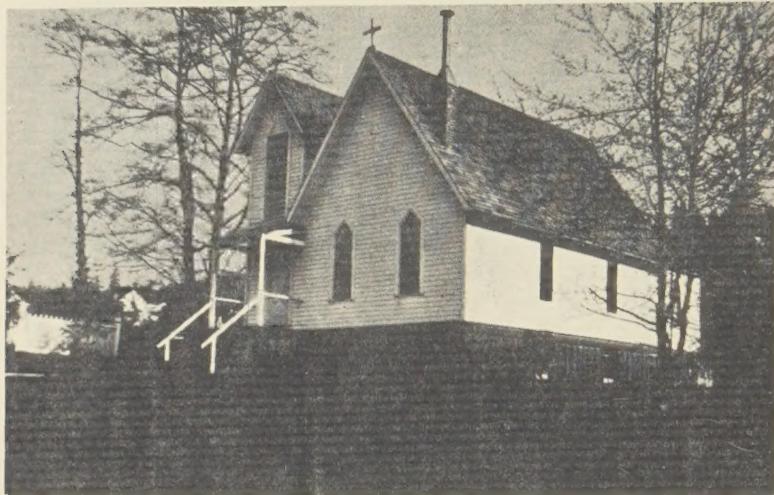


REV. MARDON D. WILSON  
1882 — 1886

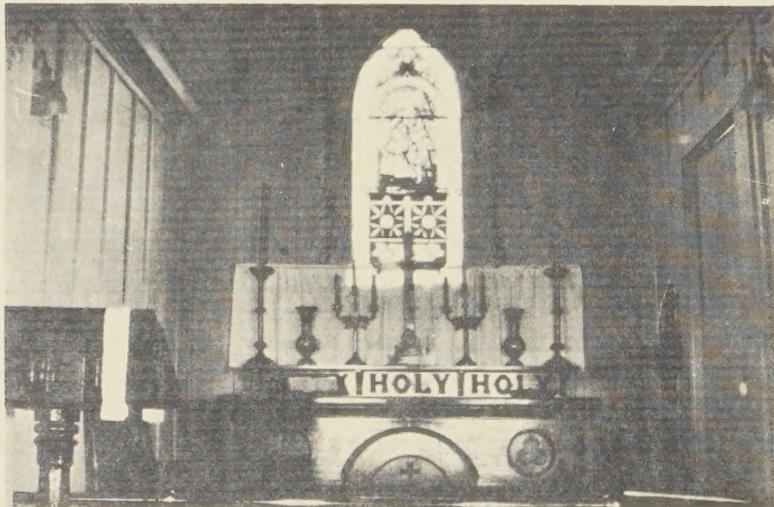
In our parish archives we have the original list of donors who subscribed money to build this first Grace Church building. It is interesting to note names that are still well known to our present congregation. For instance, Adam Van Dusen, grandfather of present day communicants —Mrs. Randall Reed, Mrs. Bert Allen and Lloyd Van Dusen. Then there was Conrad Boelling, father of Sophie and Eliza Boelling whose generous bequest to the church is responsible for the building of our present Parish Hall. Also we note the name of John Hobson, great grandfather of Mrs. Eugene Lowe. All told, 41 prominent Astorians of that day contributed \$590.62 toward the fund to build the first Grace Church building. It was located on the north side of what is now Commercial Street, about 50 feet from the corner of 8th Street, on the site now occupied by the eastern half of the present Spexarth Building.

In 1871 Mr. Hyland, with the financial help of Bishop Morris, erected a building in back of the church for use as a school house. With the help of Mrs. Hyland, who before her marriage was a school teacher, they opened a school. Apparently the public school system at that time was non-existent or was inadequate (the Astoria school records are not clear on this subject) because we understand that the school was well attended by the children of the Astoria residents of that time. The school continued to function during the remainder of his rectorate at Grace Church. In 1878 Mr. Hyland left for the east where he accepted a call to the "Church of the Holy Comforter" in New York. In the nineties Mr. Hyland retired and with Mrs. Hyland returned to Astoria to spend their

*Grace Church — 100 years*



Holy Innocents Chapel in Upper Astoria



## *Grace Church — 100 years*

declining years, Mr. Hyland passing away in 1904, and Mrs. Hyland in 1925. Both were very well known to many of our older present day communicants. The Hylands had a deep affection for the church they had established so long ago, and Mrs. Hyland left practically her entire estate to the Grace Church Memorial Endowment Fund.

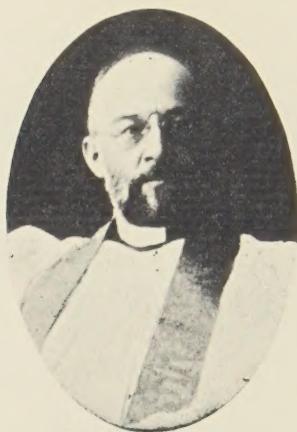
In 1878 the Rev. Octavious Parker took over the pastoral duties vacated by Mr. Hyland. However, he only remained a year, leaving for Alaska where he was famed as the first American missionary in Alaska. Following Mr. Parker, Rev. Alfred Perkins came directly from the east to Astoria and remained with Grace Church for about two years. He resigned September 6, 1881. The records do not disclose any significant events that may have taken place during his incumbency. Then for a year Grace Church was without a Rector. The good lay members, however, kept up the church and its work to the best of their ability which apparently was considerable.

Late in 1882 Rev. Marden D. Wilson became Rector. It was under Mr. Wilson's rectorate that the present Grace Church building was built. The property on which this church now stands was a legacy from Mrs. Susan Shively, augmented by gifts from Mrs. Shively's brother, Milton Elliott. The plans for this fine church edifice which we today enjoy were drawn by Mr. J. E. Ferguson; the contract to build the church was given to Mr. Louis Hartwig. Mr. Hartwig contracted to build the church building for \$4,700.00! Today the cost would probably be more like \$47,000.00. The contract was signed by Mr. Hartwig in 1885 and was completed in time to hold the first service in the new building on Easter 1886 with a 6:30 A.M. celebration of the Holy Communion. The beautiful stained glass window that is back of the altar today was originally in the first church on Commercial Street.

In July 1886 Mr. Wilson who had given so much effort, time and personal funds toward the completion of the church, resigned, and again for another year the congregation was without a pastor.

In August 1887 the Rev. William S. Short, a young man of great zeal and winning personality arrived to take over the spiritual leadership of the Grace Church congregation. Mr. Short quickly endeared himself to not only his own flock, but to all the citizens of Astoria. There are a few of us here tonight who were brought up in this church under his ministry, and we all feel that we are better churchmen and women, and better citizens for having known and been taught by this man. He was dear to the hearts of not only we who knew him as children but to our parents as well.

## *Grace Church — 100 years*



REV. WILLIAM S. SHORT  
1887 — 1909



REV. GEORGE F. ROSENMULLER  
1909 — 1915

Mr. Short who had had excellent musical training as well as a beautiful tenor voice, in about 1894 organized and directed the first and only Boy Choir to exist in Astoria. The Grace Church Boy Choirs furnished the choral music during all of the rest of Mr. Short's pastorate (about 16 years) and for quite a few years after his successor took over. It was during Mr. Short's service to Grace Church that his activities in the missionary field were so noticeable. He seemed to find time to not only look after his own congregation at Grace Church, but to hold services all over Clatsop County. The first Rectory which the Short family occupied on 16th Street between Franklin and Grand is just opposite the Columbia Hospital. There was a trail leading from the back of the church to the back of the Rectory. As Mr. Short had three boys all in the Boy Choir, the trail was in constant use by the Short boys and their Choir Boy friends.

When our present Grace Church building was erected, it was built so that the entrance to the church was below the street level, and the street was just mud with no sidewalks. In 1891 it was decided that the church should be raised so as to bring it above the street level and to provide a basement to be used as a Sunday School room and other church purposes. It was estimated that \$1,500.00 would be needed to pay for this work. Who do you think headed the list, and was the largest contributor? It was the Rev. William Seymour Short. The list of donors, which we have among our historical documents, looks like a list of "who is who" of Astoria. Eighty-three persons responded to the appeal, donating to the "Building Raising Fund" the sum of \$873.00. How the Vestry

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Grace Church in 1939

managed to raise the balance of \$627.00 is not revealed to us. However, as all former Vestrymen know, raising necessary funds is a perennial task that has plagued Vestrymen for ages, so let us assume that the Vestry of 1891 efficiently solved the problem.

In 1909 the congregation and particularly the Choir Boys, were saddened to have Mr. Short announce that he was resigning as our pastor to take a missionary assignment in Hawaii.

Our sixth Rector was the Rev. George F. Rosenmuller who came to us from Pennsylvania. On the first Sunday that Mr. Rosenmuller held services, we rang our re-cast bell for the first time. The bell was re-cast from the original Grace Church bell, which incidentally, was the first church bell in Astoria, and was rung for the first time in 1867. It is at this moment hanging in our belfry and is the one you have heard on this our 100th Anniversary. Due to illness Mr. Rosenmuller was compelled to retire in 1915.

## *Grace Church — 100 years*



REV. W. R. B. TURILL  
1916 — 1919



REV. FREDRICK C. TAYLOR  
1920 — 1926

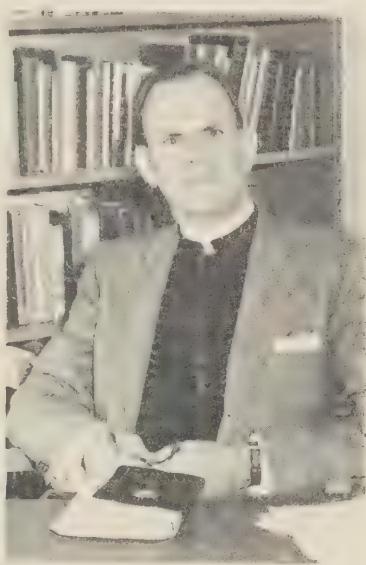
It was June 1916 before Rev. W. R. B. Turrill took over as Rector. His tenure was during the World War I days, serving until September 1919. It was during this period that our "Grace Church Memorial Endowment Fund" came into being. The creation of this Memorial Fund actually was the brain child of that faithful layman, Frank Spittle. The fund has certainly proved to be a boon to succeeding vestries, as the present vestry is well aware.

In early 1920 Rev. Fredrick C. Taylor was called and accepted. It was during this period that the yearly "Every Member Canvass" was started, thus putting Grace Church on a sound financial basis. In 1922 during Mr. Taylor's incumbency, occurred the great fire that destroyed Astoria's business district and some of her residential blocks. Despite the fact that many Grace Church members suffered severe losses because of this disaster, our present Rectory was started and completed in 1923. In December 1926 Mr. Taylor had a call from Nogales, Arizona. Feeling there were many needs for his missionary talents in this Mexican border area he accepted the call.

## *Grace Church — 100 years*



REV. EDWIN W. HUGHES  
1927 — 1946



REV. V. LOUIS LIVINGSTON  
1948 — 1956

In October 1927 Rev. Edwin W. Hughes arrived and stayed with us until 1946 when he accepted an appointment to St. Peters in Albany, Oregon, thus ending the second longest period of time that any one of our Rectors had served and guided us during our 100 years of existance. During his stay with Grace Church, he organized our present St. Catherine Guild, and dedicated on Christmas Eve the new altar rail which was carved by Mr. Thomas Thomason. Many other improvements were made.

Following Mr. Hughes came the Rev. Edward B. Birch. Mr. Birch stayed with us for only a very short time.

Succeeding Mr. Birch came our popular friend and religious teacher, Rev. V. Louis Livingston, now Rector of St. David's Church in Portland — and one of our honored guests at this our Centennial. It was while Mr. Livingston was with us that our delightfully pleasant Parish Hall was erected in 1954-55. Mr. and Mrs. Livingston were with us from February 1948 to October 1, 1956.

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Grace Church as it looks today

Following Mr. Livingston came Rev. R. L. Green who served us from November 1956 until February 1958.

On March 15, 1958, Grace Church was fortunate to secure as our 13th and present Rector, Rev. Dr. Carl H. Gross. In his quiet and unassuming manner Carl is, and has, under his leadership, been accomplishing wonders in both material and religious aspects. We all know what these things are, but to sum up some of the material accomplishments during Dr. Gross' tenure, which we all hope continues for many years, I would call your attention to the following:

Repairs to the front steps leading to the church.

Repairs to the belfry.

A complete re-roofing of the church.

A complete outside painting job on both church and rectory.

A re-carpeting of the entire church.

Repainting and cleaning of the interior of the church.

A new heating plant.

Removal of the old floor on the basement Sunday School Room and replacement with a concrete floor and the installation of new supports.

## *Grace Church — 100 years*



REV. DR. CARL H. GROSS  
1958 —

The building of individual Sunday School class rooms and other repairs — so that we now have the finest physical plant we have ever had, and all in tip top condition.

Another facet of the history of Grace Church has been the contribution made in the earlier days to the spiritual well being of the areas surrounding Astoria. With the helpful approval of Bishop Morris, Grace Church became the hub of a number of Parochial Missions established in the surrounding area. The first was Holy Innocents Chapel established in 1873 in what was then known as Upper Astoria. Ground for the Chapel was donated by General John Adair. The location is on Grand Avenue between 31st and 33rd Streets. The first service was held on the 12th of July 1874 with Rev. Mr. Hyland officiating. There was no road — only a trail between what we today call downtown Astoria and Uppertown or Upper Astoria — hence it was not at that time practical for the residents to attend Grace Church — but in 1918 Holy Innocents was closed and the former communicants moved to Grace Church where they and their children are among some of our present day most active members. Then followed St. Thomas by the Sea at Skipanon located just across the road from the present Warrenton High School. This church building built in 1892 was later moved to downtown Warrenton and sold, its communicants transferring to Grace Church in Astoria. Next in 1901 was Calvary in Seaside, now of course on its own as a most flourishing Parish. Another of the parochial missions established by Grace Church in 1902 was Chadwell on the upper Lewis and Clark River. The first services were held in the Chadwell School House. Next came St. Johns at Hammond in 1903, services being held in a hall above a store and later in the Meth-

## *Grace Church — 100 years*

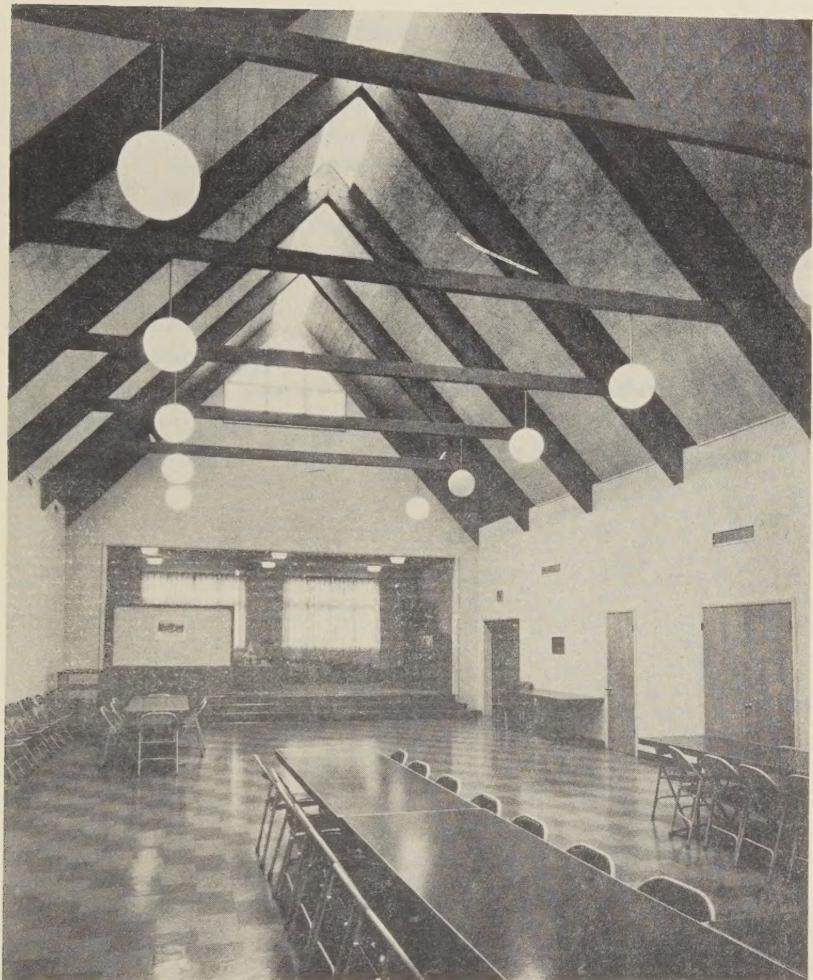


A view of the interior of Grace Church as it appears today

odist Community Church. When the railroad came to Hammond and Fort Stevens about six years later, the members transferred to Grace Church. All of these missions were served by Rev. Short of Grace Church. In 1904 Rev. James E. Forsythe arrived, being sent here as an assistant missionary at large. His duties were to assist the Rector of Grace Church with the missions at Hammond, Skipanon and Seaside as well as helping the Rector of Grace Church with other parochial mission duties. In a 1903 Parochial Report to the Bishop, Rev. Mr. Short asks for three dozen hymnals for St. Johns Mission, Hammond, but agreed that if three dozen were not forthcoming, he would settle for two dozen. In the same report he apologizes for delay in turning in a report to the Bishop, stating "I am working on my annual report and would rather take a spanking." In addition to the parochial missions here mentioned, Grace Church Rectors were charged with the obligation to hold services as often as practical at Vesper Parish located in the upper Nehalem River Valley in Columbia County. In the days before railroads and highways it was a three day journey to Vesper and return; the journey being by boat and horseback.

Besides his other gifts Mr. Short seems to have been blessed with a very subtle sense of humor. In his report on Parochial Mission

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The Parish Hall, completed in 1955

Stations, and his plea for an assistant, he says, "What we would like to see would be a clergyman to service our Lower Columbia Missions who could speak Finnish, Swedish, Norwegian, German and Danish — or better still five men — one for each of these nationalities."

It is obvious that a church is only as strong as its congregation — hence a historical record is incomplete without reference to the laity. From the records we find mention of many of the earlier unselfish lay-

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men and women who struggled to keep this parish alive and active. There was Adam Van Dusen, and his sons and daughters, the Adair family, Susan Shively and her brother Judge Milton Elliott; and of more recent times the P. L. Cherry family, and B. F. Stone, father of our esteemed organist, and of course, many, many more too numerous to mention, but we must mention two men of our present time whose devotion to the parish has been so outstanding. One is George Peeke who has devoted so much time, thought and effort to our parish. The other is that most respected friend and churchman, Frank Spittle, who for approximately 75 years has been a communicant of Grace Church and has unselfishly accepted every task a parish could ask of a lay member. With such dedicated individuals and congregations as we have had in the past 100 years — we can look forward with every confidence that succeeding laities will continue the fine record of Grace Church during the next 100 years.



